

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON,JR.  
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TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY DACCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 064357

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY

BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING BRIEF STOPOVER IN WASHINGTON MARCH 19, INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA MET WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON. MEHTA, JUST BACK FROM WATERS CONFERENCE, LOOKED FOR EARLY RESUMPTION OF THE TALKS ON FARAKKA. HE NOTED THAT FOREIGN POLICY WAS NOT A MAJOR CAMPAIGN ISSUE AND EXPECTED POLICY CONTINUITY WHOEVER WON. ATHERTON SAID HE THOUGHT THAT WE WERE MAKING STRIDES IN BILATERAL RELATIONS IN FINDING BETTER BALANCE. END SUMMARY.

1. INDIAN ELECTIONS. MEHTA SAID THAT HE WAS PLEASED FOREIGN POLICY WAS NOT AN ISSUE IN THE INDIAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN. WHOEVER WON, HE DID NOT EXPECT CHANGE IN INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY. HE ANTICIPATED A CONTINUED EFFORT TO  
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IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORS AND TO SEEK A REDEFINED INDIAN ROLE IN THE NORTH/SOUTH CONTEXT.

2. NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION - TARAPUR. ATHERTON SAID THAT HUMAN RIGHTS, NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, AND REDUCTION OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS EXPORTS WERE EMERGING AS MAIN FEATURES. AT THIS POINT, WE WERE STILL TRANSLATING GENERAL CONCEPTS

TO SPECIFIC POLICIES. WITH REGARD TO TARAPUR, ATHERTON SAID WE WERE AWARE OF THE URGENCY AND ASKED THE INDIANS FOR A LITTLE PATIENCE UNTIL THE ADMINISTRATION COMPLETED ITS NUCLEAR REVIEW.

3. INDO-U.S. RELATIONS. ATHERTON SAID THAT HE HAD A "GOOD FEELING" AND BELIEVED THAT WE WERE BEGINNING TO FIND THE OVERALL BALANCE WE HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR. THERE WERE NOW MANY AREAS OF COMMON INTEREST, ESPECIALLY IN THE NORTH/SOUTH ARENA WHERE MULTILATERAL ISSUES PRESENTED A "RIPE" AREA FOR WORKING TOGETHER. MEHTA AGREED BUT ADDED THAT IF INDIA IS TO BE USEFUL ON NORTH/SOUTH ISSUES IT NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO STAY IN PHASE WITH ITS THIRD WORLD CONFRERES EVEN THOUGH ITS OBJECTIVE POSITION WAS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FROM MANY LDCS.

JOINT COMMISSION. ATHERTON COMMENTED THAT WE HOPED THE JOINT COMMISSION MEETINGS COULD NOW GO FORWARD SO THAT THE SUBCOMMISSIONS NOT LOSE MOMENTUM. HE THOUGHT THIS WAS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR THE EDUCATION GROUP.

4. SOUTH ASIA. MEHTA COMMENTED THAT THE TREND TOWARD STABILITY WAS ENCOURAGING ALTHOUGH STILL FRAGILE. HE HOPED THAT THE GREAT POWERS WOULD RECOGNIZE THAT THIS TREND HURT NO ONE. ATHERTON SAID THAT THE U.S. COULDN'T AGREE MORE. MEHTA SAID HE HOPED OTHERS AGREED THAT INDIA WAS NOT PURSUING A CHAVINISTIC CONQUERING POLICY. IN THIS CONTEXT PSYCHOLOGICAL PERCEPTIONS WERE IMPORTANT AND THE CONFIDENTIAL

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INDIANS HOPED OUTSIDERS WOULD NOT STIR CONCERNS WITH LARGE SCALE ARMS TRANSFERS SUCH AS A-7S.

5. FARAKKA. MEHTA SAID THAT THE SITUATION WAS BAD THIS YEAR BECAUSE OF UNUSUALLY LOW WATER LEVELS. INDIA HOPED TO RESUME DISCUSSIONS WITH BANGLADESH AFTER ELECTIONS. THE TASK, MEHTA SAID, WAS TO WORK OUT A "BALANCE OF SACRIFICES" IN THE SHORTRUN AND TO GET ON WITH THE LONG-TERM TASK OF OBTAINING INCREASED WATER SUPPLIES.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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